

Section 18 – Meeting #1

Water Comprehensive Plan Task Force

March 12, 2007: Capitol Region Watershed District

Meeting Notes by Andrew Jacobson

Members Present: George Johnson (chair), Yung Kang Lu, Cliff Aichinger, Sarah Clark, Marj Ebensteiner, Bruce Elder, Bob Fossum, Steve Johnson, Boa Lee, Hoka Miller, Gregory Page, Shirley Reider, Obi Sium, Ron Struss, John Wells and Rebecca Wooden

Member Absent: Steve Schneider

Staff Present: Larry Soderholm, Anne Hunt, Kou Vang, Anne Weber, Larry Zangs, Jie Zhao and Andrew Jacobson

1. **Welcome** by George Johnson. The members and staff introduced themselves. Johnson set baseline rules for task force meetings.
2. **Background on Water Plan.** Larry Soderholm reviewed some of the materials in the task force's ringbinder.
3. **Presentation by Jack Frost, MCES: (651) 602 - 1078**
 - **Metro Area:** Within the Twin Cities metropolitan region, there are 30 to 35 watershed districts/management organizations that all have plans. This leads to complexity but also good overall protection of water. The Twin Cities and Minnesota are often cited as national leaders in water issues. Water issues have now been tied to the Comprehensive Plans required by Met Council. The 2008 Water Comp Plan requirements are updates of previous plans.
 - **Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and Lake Pepin:** This is one of the largest TMDL studies ever undertaken. Lake Pepin is listed as impaired for water quality by two measures: excess nutrients leading to eutrophication and turbidity. Its watershed is approximately half of Minnesota's total land area and includes some Wisconsin land as well because its tributaries are the Minnesota, St. Croix and Upper Mississippi Rivers. The report by the MPCA should come out sometime in 2008 with an implementation plan developed in 2009.
 - **Future considerations:**
 - Direct connections between land use decisions, impervious surfaces and water quality. At even 10-25% impervious cover, a negative impact on water quality has been found.
 - Proprietary devices that clean water, but who maintains them?
 - Stormwater management has moved beyond controlling rates of flow and into controlling total volumes. Volume control is important yet tougher than expected in practice. Should there be

- a stormwater credit from the utility for rain gardens? (Germany is much more advanced in this movement than America)
 - Inspection is critical in enforcing stormwater regulations and erosion controls. Emphasis on increased inspections, but it should be in conjunction with increased education.
 - Integrating LWMP, NPDES, SWPPP with nondegradation policies and TMDL's.
 - Chlorides will become an increasing problem in TMDL studies.
- 4. **General Discussion:** Johnson called on people to discuss their thoughts on the plan and to bring up any questions that they had. Everyone commented and contributed. The comments are grouped roughly by idea.
 - Surface water management:
 - Porous pavement has improved tremendously. It costs roughly 3 times more than regular concrete but saves space and does not form icy surfaces in winter.
 - In terms of construction, especially for roads, what are we willing to pay for a specific incremental gain in water quality?
 - Saint Paul does not have a shoreline ordinance.
 - How should or will this plan relate to or dictate maintenance issues, such as street sweeping.
 - What will be the City's policy on rain gardens?
 - EPA and statewide rules are now forcing the WD and WMO's to become more stringent.
 - TMDL:
 - The biggest issue with TMDL's will be Lake Pepin and its tributaries; the study will be completed around 2008.
 - A few lakes within Saint Paul are impaired: Como Lake for aquatic recreation and aquatic consumption and Beaver Lake for aquatic recreation.
 - How do urban areas contribute to phosphorus loads?
 - Mississippi River issues:
 - Goal of Riverfront Corp is to connect people with the river. Push for the creation of the Great River Park; new principles include more urban, more natural and more connected.
 - A working river; the Upper River Services does a few specified services for barges in the Twin Cities area.
 - Downstream users should have as clean water as possible; everybody downstream relies on upstream users to be conscientious of what they put into the water.
 - Mississippi National River and Recreation Area: the Park Service owns only 35 acres of land and has no regulatory authority. It only provides information and grants (although in smaller amounts than NPS wants to have).

- Water quality is measured at Anoka and at Jordan; goal of MCES is to have Mississippi River water the same quality when it leaves the Metropolitan Area as when it enters. This is a challenge made more difficult by the entrance of the Minnesota River. Also, current monitoring efforts are insufficient.
- External sources of information:
 - Environmental Quality Board is a collection of citizens and heads of nine state agencies that are active in Minnesota's environment and development. The board develops policy, creates long-range plans and reviews environmentally significant projects. The board also deals with cross-cutting issues and interacts with the Governor's Clean Water Cabinet.
 - MNRRA – "Water Resources Information and Overview Report," 2006
 - EQB – "Connecting With Minnesota's Urban Rivers," 2002
- Concluding thoughts:
 - Emphasis on integration: not just the water comp plan relating to other comp plans but also realizing that all waters and water management policies interact.
 - Density is as critical as decreasing impervious surface coverage in terms of overall effect on water quality in a watershed.
 - Design city elements for multifunctional purposes (i.e. streets as more than just an impervious surface, parks as more than just recreation space)
 - What is scope of this task force and plan?
 - Look at shorelines not just from the land but from the water.
 - Treat every parcel of land in Saint Paul as though it were lakeshore property.

Meeting ended at 5:30 pm.